

## Park Overview

Established as the first Pennsylvania state park in 1893, Valley Forge State Park was identified as having national significance and offered by the state for inclusion in the National Park System. The establishment of Valley Forge National Historical Park was authorized through an act of Congress, Public Law 94-337, on July 4, 1976. The objective for creating the park was “to preserve and commemorate for the people of the United States the area associated with the heroic suffering, hardship, and determination and resolve of General George Washington’s Continental Army during the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge.”

Few places evoke the spirit of patriotism and independence, represent individual and collective sacrifice, or demonstrate the resolve, tenacity and determination of the people of the United States to be free, as does Valley Forge National Historical Park. The Valley Forge story has been a source of inspiration for Americans and the world for over 200 years. No battles were fought here, no bayonet charges or artillery bombardments took place, but from December 1777 to June 1778 approximately 2,000 soldiers died at hospitals in the



*Reenactments of the June 19, 1778 march-out of the Continental Army occur on an annual basis at Valley Forge.*

### *Mission Statement*

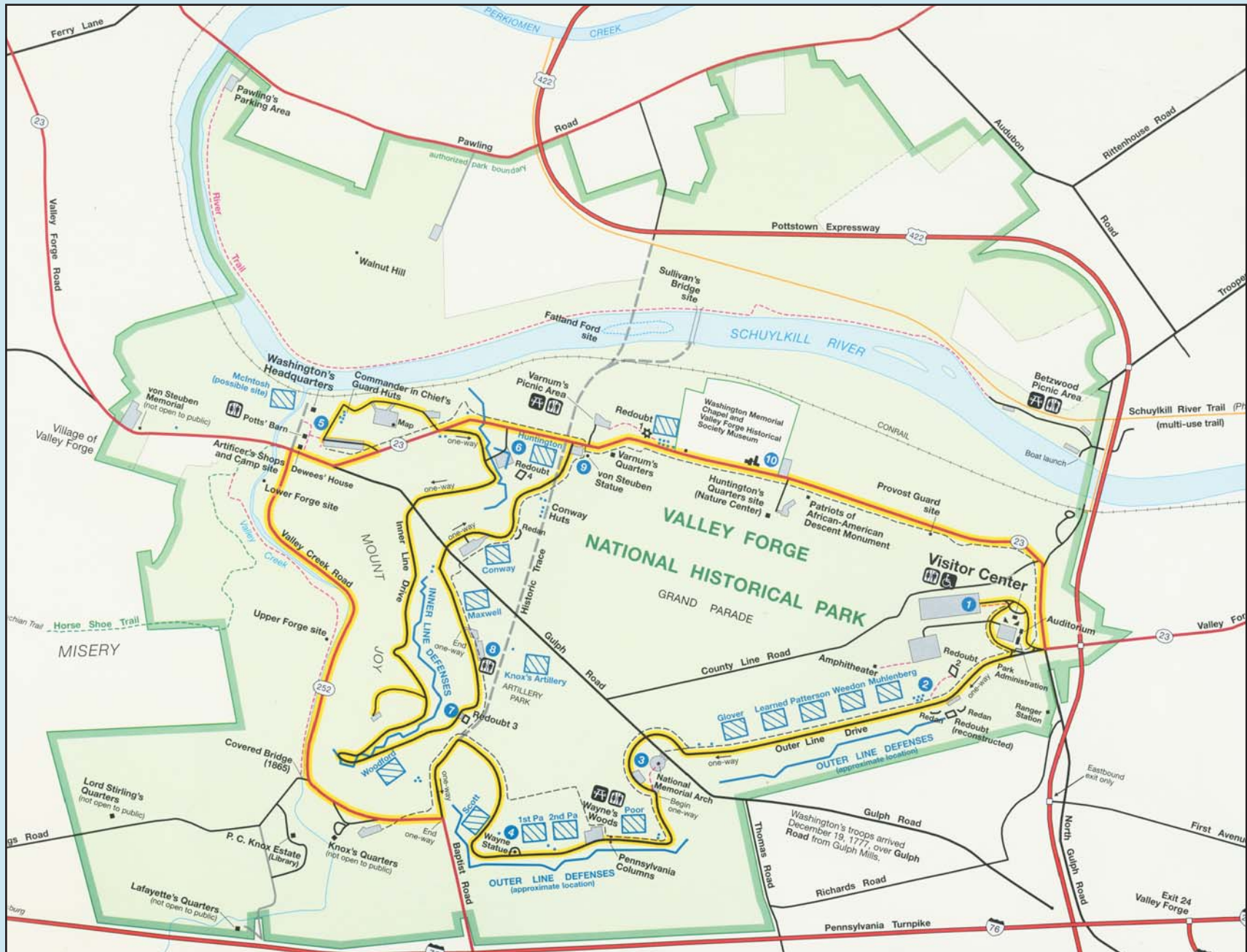
Through the preservation of Valley Forge National Historical Park, the National Park Service preserves, protects, and maintains the natural and cultural resources that are associated with and commemorate the encampment of the Continental Army in 1777/1778 and educates the American people about one of the most defining events in our nation’s history where the sacrifice, tenacity, resolve and determination of General George Washington and the Continental Army continues to serve as an inspiration for this and future generations.

surrounding area. Here, in spite of want and suffering, the Continental Army under General George Washington’s leadership survived, and emerged as a cohesive, more disciplined fighting force. Valley Forge is the story of an army’s epic struggle to survive against terrible odds, against hunger, disease, and the unrelenting forces of nature.

Now spanning over 3,400 acres, Valley Forge NHP preserves the cultural and natural resources associated with this encampment, and it makes this valuable part of America’s heritage available to over 1.35 million\* visitors each year for their experience, enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation.

*\* Visitation number does not include the over 5.8 million non-recreational visitors using the park’s roads as a commuter thoroughfare.*

# Map of Valley Forge National Historical Park



## Park Inventory

<b>GEOGRAPHY (as of Dec. 2000)</b>	
Acreage within authorized park boundaries	3,466
Acreage within park boundaries not owned by the public	461
Acreage infested with non-native species	Approx. 3,000
Acreage contaminated with asbestos (potentially contaminated)	95.7 (388.1)
Picnic areas	3
Roadways	41 miles
Waterways	5 miles
Hiking trails and walks	21 miles
Unauthorized trails	16 miles
Counties/townships	2/5
<b>VISITATION (Jan-Dec. 2000)</b>	
Annual recreational visitors	1,350,000
Annual non-recreational visits (commuters)	5,880,000
Population within 25 miles	Approx. 5,000,000
<b>PERSONNEL (Jan-Dec 2000)</b>	
Full-time employees	81.5 FTE*
Part-time employees	4.7 FTE
Volunteer hours (FTE)	20,363 (9.8 FTE)
<b>RESOURCES (as of Dec. 2000)</b>	
Historical structures (in poor condition)	196 (78)
Visitor center	1
Audiovisual auditorium	1
Boat launch	1
Railroad stations-not active	2
Railroad tracks-active	2
Objects in museum collections (on display)	134,481 (1,300)
Library collection (books/periodicals)	6,100 / 2,200
Archeological sites	622
Nature center	1
<b>MISC (Jan-Dec, 2000)</b>	
Deer/car Collisions	79
ARPA** Violations (loss)	5 (\$80,000)

\* FTE (full time equivalent) is equal to one person working 2080 hrs per year.

\*\* See pg. 22 for explanation of ARPA (Archaeological Resource Protection Act)

## The North Side

Most people think of the area south of the Schuylkill River when they think of Valley Forge. The park, however, includes approximately 640 acres within the Congressionally authorized boundary north of the river. While the primary encampment was south of the river, the commissary was located in the north. The Army completed Sullivan's Bridge across the river in February 1778, and used it and a nearby ford to move supplies and men between the banks. When the Army broke camp in June 1778, most of the troops spent the last week of the encampment north of the river on lands now within the park.

There are approximately 250 acres of private lands still within the park north of the river, having not been acquired despite Congressional intent due to a lack of funding. This patchwork of lands makes the area difficult to manage and interpret. Nonetheless, historic resources, wetlands and other natural resources, and recreational opportunities (primarily hiking, biking, and boating) abound for those looking for a slightly "wilder" experience at Valley Forge.

The lack of public knowledge about the north side, coupled with the high percentage of non-public land, make it vulnerable to development. One 72-acre parcel of private land inside the boundary is proposed for subdivision and single-family housing development. That parcel and an adjacent tract of 145 acres in public ownership have also been proposed for conversion to use as a national cemetery.

North Side's historical story includes the Walnut Hill barn, which is in grave need of repair.



Both of these proposals are inconsistent with the park's mission.